

53. Undesirability of granting to outsiders lands which could be cultivated by natives.

*Mr. Dominic Thomman (Agricultural Association, Changanachery)* referred to Travancore as one of the most thickly populated countries of the world and said that about 2400 square miles or one-third of the whole area of the State had been already set apart as reserved forests. Population was steadily growing and Government would soon find themselves confronted with the problem of finding breathing space for the overflowing millions of the land. The High Ranges covering an area of nearly 1000 square miles had been already given away to tea, coffee and cardamom planters and large tracts of land, in the low-lying districts also, were being granted to Europeans for the cultivation of rubber. He prayed that, as far as possible, lands which could be cultivated by natives should not be given to outsiders and that the simple and just instructions recently issued by Government for regulating the grant of lands for rubber cultivation should be strictly enforced in practice.

*Reply.*—No general rule can be laid down. Encouragement for special industry should be given wherever needed, consistently with the preservation of the permanent interests of the State.

59. Reclamation of backwater for paddy cultivation.

*Mr. G. A. Baker (Kottayam)* said that in 1903 a notification was published at the instance of the British Government prohibiting all reclamation of the Vembanad backwater on the ground that this would cause the silting up of the Cochin harbour. The poor ryots suffered heavily on account of this prohibition and, unless a portion at least of the backwater were permitted to be reclaimed, it would be difficult to meet the growing demands of the people of this State. An investigation should also be held as to whether and how far such reclamation would really affect the Cochin harbour.

*Mr. Dominic Thomman (Agricultural Association, Changanachery) and Mr. K. N. Kesava Pillai (Quilon)* supported Mr. Baker's views.

*Mr. M. Narayana Panicker (Ampalapuzha)* observed that the southern and eastern portions of the Vembanad backwater could be easily reclaimed and as the yield of the punja fields was becoming poorer and poorer, the ryots in the Northern taluks had been long turn-